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**Testimony in Support of the
Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
Appropriations Committee Hearing – March 4, 2011**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Lynn Norton. I am 45 years old and from Plymouth, CT. I want to thank the Appropriations Committee, the General Assembly and the Governor's office for the funding for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled (CHCPD) is a pilot program that provides care coordination, home care and support for 41 people in CT between the ages of 18 to 64. The participants in the program are individuals who are living with degenerative neurological disabilities who are not eligible for other programs.

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 11 years ago. As a result of my MS, I am legally blind and am unable to walk or stand without support. I am married and I have a 14 year old son; my husband works very long hours in order to support our household. Thanks to the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled, I am able to continue living at home and receive 15 hours a week of home care assistance. This is crucial for my independence and for our family to function. As a result of the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled, I was able to find a caregiver who helps me on a variety of levels. My caregiver takes me to doctor's appointments, assists with mobility transfers, helps with dressing, grocery shopping, meal preparation, home care and chore assistance. Furthermore, she cares about my well-being. It is largely because of her assistance that I feel as though I still have some control over my own household.

This program is helping to keep our family together. We are able to spend more time focusing on raising our son and less time focusing on managing my care. Without this program, it is possible that I would be placed in a nursing home, separating me from my family.

I recognize that the state is facing a major deficit and that the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled may be in jeopardy. I am a participant in the program and urge you to keep the program in the budget. The program serves 41 people and currently has a waiting list of 63. It is important to realize that this program can save the state of CT up to \$4,247 per person per month for every person on the program who is not institutionalized.

Please continue funding this program. For all of us on the program, we are just one medical crisis away from going to a nursing home. This program is helping me to remain independent and allows me to stay with my family.

Thank you,

Lynn Norton